

Some notable British barkfly (Psocoptera) observations

Studies by the authors of the barkflies, or outdoor Psocoptera – preferred alternative name to barklice proposed by Alexander (2003, *Psocid News*, **3**: 1-2) – occurring in various parts of Britain has resulted in several noteworthy finds. These previously unpublished records include the discovery of two species new to Britain, species not previously recorded out-of-doors and new vice-county records for other notable species.

Family Trogiidae

Lepinotus patruelis Pearman

A single female specimen was found by B. Saville at North Merchiston Cemetery, Edinburgh (O.S. grid reference NT 234723 – VC 83) on 26.vii.2004. The specimen was caught while searching the surface and loose bark of deciduous tree trunks. W. R. Dolling obtained three female specimens by sieving tidal debris in a saltmarsh at Stone Creek, Yorkshire (TA 2318 – VC 61) on 7.ix.2004.

The identification of all specimens was confirmed by C. Lienhard of the Geneva Natural History Museum. These finds appear to be the first outdoor records reported in Britain.

Family Liposcelididae

Liposcelis bostrychophila Badonnel

A female specimen was sieved from a pile of wood chips under trees at Wheldrake Woods, Yorkshire (SE 6647 – VC 61) by W. R. Dolling on 7.viii.2004. The identification of the specimen was determined by C. Lienhard.

Although widely distributed as a domestic species this appears to be the first outdoor record in Britain.

Family Caeciliusidae

Epicaecilius pilipennis (Lienhard)

W.R. Dolling found one male specimen in pine needle litter at the foot of an isolated pine in a clearing on Allerthorpe Common, Yorkshire (SE 7647) – VC 61) on 24.iv.2004. On 21.vii.2004, KNAA beat a single specimen of this species from a dead branch in the lower canopy of an ancient oak tree in Kedleston Park, Derbyshire (SK 303402 – VC 57). The species was also found in 2004 from another Midland locality: B. Saville recorded the species in Brandwood End Cemetery in Birmingham (Saville, 2004, *Worcestershire Record*, **17**: 25-6). *E. pilipennis* is otherwise known from the Lothians (Saville, 1999, *Glas. Nat.* **23**(4): 50-4), Sussex (Alexander, 2002, *Epicaecilius pilipennis* (Lienhard) (Psocoptera) new to England from West Sussex. *Ent. Rec.* **114**: 181), Wales (Whitehead, 2003, *Ent. Mon. Mag.* **139**: 237-9), Cumbria (Saville, 2004, *The Carlisle Naturalist* **12**(1): 17-20) and Northumberland (Saville, in press. Some Northumberland barklice (Insecta: Psocoptera) observations. *Trans. Nat. Hist. Soc. Northumbria*).

These records demonstrate that the species is widely distributed across Britain.

Family Amphipsocidae

Kolbia quisquiliarum Bertkau

W. R. Dolling found specimens of this species from two localities in Kent, both from chalk turf: Polhill Down (TQ 5060 – VC 16) on 19.ix.1976 and ix.1978, and Etchinghill (TR 1738 – VC) on 31.vii.1976. Two specimens were taken on Swift's Hill (SO 877067 – VC 33), E. Gloucestershire, by KNAA: a micropterous female, 19.vi.2003, and a male, 6.ix.2003; both were identified by C. Lienhard.

The first specimen was taken from the sward by use of a garden leaf blower/vac machine powered by a two-stroke engine and modified with a butterfly net attached within the suction tube, the second by more conventional sweep-netting. Swift's Hill is an ancient limestone grassland site in the Cotswold Hills, designated a SSSI, and managed as a Nature Reserve by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. *Kolbia quisquiliarum* is a rare species associated with "low vegetation" across southern and central England (T.R. New, 1974. *Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects*. I (7). *Psocoptera*. RESL). Its presence in ancient limestone grassland may suggest that its rarity reflects poor mobility and an association with long-established semi-natural open vegetation.

Family Ectopsocidae

Ectopsocus axillaris (Smithers)

Between 1999 and 2004 studies to discover the distribution of this species in the Lothians were carried out by B. Saville with help from Alastair Rae. The species was recorded at 13 locations (country estates, churchyards and a garden) within an area 30km by 20km ranging between Dalmeny Estate in the west (VC 84), Gosford Estate in the east (VC 82) and Arniston Estate in the south (VC 83). The species is generally found on conifers, both native (yew) and introduced (e.g., Cypress), but a few specimens were found on an oak in Dalmeny Estate. The fact that the species was found at every one of five randomly selected locations in central Edinburgh suggests that the species is widespread within the city.

On 31.x.2001 W.R. Dolling discovered that a large population of the species had developed in a bagged-up bracket fungus that had been collected at Danthorpe, Yorkshire (TA 2432 – VC 61). The retained voucher specimen was recently identified. A later record from nearby Elstronwick has been published (Dolling, 2004. *Ent. Mon. Mag.* **140**: 315).

Family Peripsocidae

Peripsocus milleri (Tillyard)

This species turned up in some numbers amongst material beaten by KNAA from the dead twigs of fallen branches beneath old open-grown oak trees in Hardwick Park (SK 4663 – VC 57), Derbyshire: four males and three females, 18.v.2004, and a male 19.vii.2004. A female was taken from the well-lit trunk of an ancient open-grown beech tree in Calke Park (SK 363231), Derbyshire, 19.v.2004. Two females and a male were amongst material beaten from dead twigs on a fallen branch under an ash tree on Wilderhope Manor Farm (SO 542928 – VC 40),

Wenlock Edge, Shropshire, by KNAA, 28.vii.2004. The tree is open-grown and appeared to be derived from an old hedgerow. On 8.viii.2004, B. Saville found a single female of this species on the trunk of a mature oak tree in Jasmin Croft, Birmingham (SP 073796 – VC 37) (Saville, 2004, *Worcestershire Record*. **17**: 25-6).

The specimens were sent to C. Lienhard who confirmed their identification. This species' inclusion on the British list is due to two specimens being discovered in the hold of a ship in Liverpool in 1953 (T.R. New, 1974. *Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects*. **I** (7). *Psocoptera*. RESL). These are the first known outdoor records in Britain and suggest that it may now have become widespread in parts of Britain.

Family Trichopsocidae

Trichopsocus clarus (Banks)

B. Saville obtained two specimens by shaking deciduous tree branches in Regent's Park, London (VC 21) on 16.vi.2004. The identification of one of the specimens was confirmed by C. Lienhard. New (1974. *Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects*. **I** (7). *Psocoptera*. RESL) has commented that the species is "usually in hothouses or similar situations in England", which implies that there may be some outdoor records. New (pers. com.) says that J. V. Pearnan had mentioned finding it outside but that the record was probably not published. He also thinks that there has been some confusion in the UK between *clarus* and *dalii* in the past.

T. clarus has been known to be established outside in Ireland for some time (Fahy, 1970. *Proc Royal Irish Academy*. **69**: 139-163); the London observation provides definite evidence that the species is able to live out-of-doors in the UK.

Trichopsocus brincki Badonnel

A female of this addition to the GB List was knocked from the dead lower branches of an ancient hedgerow pollard at Channons Farm (SY 012990 – VC 3), Broadclyst, S. Devon, by KNAA, 18.ix.2003.

The unfamiliar specimen was sent to Charles Lienhard to ascertain its identity. The locality is a pastoral agricultural landscape with large numbers of ancient pollard trees which originate from "Asheclyste" – extensive common rough pastures owned by Torre Abbey into the 16th Century. Lienhard (1998. *Psocopteres Euro-Mediterraneens*. Faune de France 83.) regarded it as endemic to Madeira, where it has been recorded on many occasions in the mixed and Eucalyptus forests. Its discovery in SW England, in an ancient landscape well away from any sources of imported plant material, may suggest an overlooked native. The discovery of further specimens will be needed, however, before we may be able to distinguish whether we are dealing with a native population or an established introduction.

Family Elipsocidae

Elipsocus moebiusi Tetens

On 27.vii.2004, KNAA found this species to be numerous on the lower branches of field oaks at Blakeway Fields, Much Wenlock, Shropshire (SO 597992 – VC 40).

A female specimen was caught by B. Saville by beating the branches of an isolated oak standard at the edge of an arable field at Barrow, Shropshire (SJ658000 – vc 40) on 5.viii.2004.

This species is otherwise known from the Lothians (Saville, 2001. *Ent. Mon. Mag.* **137**: 79-83), Cumbria (Saville, 2004. *The Carlisle Naturalist*. **12**(1): 17-20) and Northumberland (Saville, in press. Some Northumberland barklice (Insecta: Psocoptera) observations. *Trans. Nat. Hist. Soc. Northumbria*).

Pseudopsocus rostocki Kolbe

W. R. Dolling found a female specimen of this species on lichen-covered conifer bark at Knole Park, Sevenoaks (vc 16), x.1976. The site is a wood-pasture deer-park.

A female was found amongst material collected by beating the dead lower branches of a veteran open-grown oak of 4.65m girth at breast height in Parham Park (TQ 059148 – VC 13), West Sussex, by KNAA, 21.x.2003. The specimen was sent to B. Saville for determination and was later confirmed by C. Lienhard. Parham Park is an ancient deer park famous for its old growth epiphyte lichen flora and saproxylic beetle fauna and protected by SSSI designation. *P. rostocki* is a rare species in Britain and only known from “few records from southern England” (New, 1974). It would be interesting to know if the other known sites are also ancient wood pastures.

Protopsocus pulchripennis (Perkins)

This distinctive species was found amongst fairly short, open-structured grassy vegetation on sand close to high tide level on several islands in the Isles of Scilly (VC 1), in ix.2000 by P. Kirby. Voucher specimens have been shown to K.N.A. Alexander who has confirmed their identity. Details of the captures are as follows: Bryher, between Great Porth and Rushy Bay, SZ 875146 – 876141, 9.ix.2000; Samson, Bar Point, SV 879132, 12.ix.2000; St Agnes/Gugh, The Bar, SV 887083, 8.ix.2000; St Mary's, Porth Mellon, SV 907107, 9.ix.2000; St Mary's, Thomas Porth, SV 908110, 9.ix.2000. *P. pulchripennis* was seen in considerable numbers on Bryher, but the populations on the other islands appeared sparser, or at least less conspicuous. No *P. pulchripennis* were captured during survey work in apparently suitable vegetation on St Martin's or Tresco in the same period, but since the survey work was not targeted at Psocoptera and *P. pulchripennis* was not recognised in the field, it may have been overlooked if it was present at low density. *P. pulchripennis* could not be found at either of the recorded localities on St Mary's in September 2002, despite specific search. This is the first record of the species in Britain.

Family Psocidae

Blaste quadrimaculata (Latreille)

On 25.vi.2004, B. Saville found one male specimen of this species on the branches of an overgrown and half dead Chinese Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*) bush. The bush was situated at the road edge of the entrance to a small industrial

estate off Leith Walk and within central Edinburgh at NT 26787561 (VC 83). On 6.vii.2004, another male specimen was found on the same bush and this specimen was sent to C. Lienhard who identified it as *quadrimaculata*. Searches for the species on other introduced conifers in the area have so far been unproductive.

Keith Alexander would like to acknowledge the sponsors of the various commissioned surveys which led to his discoveries: Dan Abrahams (English Nature, Derbyshire), Pete Carty and Caroline Uff (National Trust Shropshire Hills Estate); Rosie Cliffe (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, with HLF funding); Ralph Hobbs (English Nature, West Sussex). Special thanks go to John Channon (National Trust Property Manager of the Killerton Estate in Devon) whose project led to the addition of *T. brincki* to the British List. Peter Kirby's work in the Isles of Scilly in 2000 was part of a survey for the burrower bug *Geotomus punctulatus* funded by English Nature under its Species Recovery programme.

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Hazards of butterfly collecting – ABD in the Sundarban mangroves, Bangladesh, Christmas 2002

When you live in Dhaka, a crowded and polluted city of more than ten million and in one of the world's most crowded countries, regular doses of ABD (Anything **B**ut **D**haka) is an essential mental health requirement. So over Christmas 2002 we decided to take a cruise to the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans . . . NO, not the kind of cruise of the glossy travel supplements. We went on the good ship m/v Chuuti, a small boat just able to sleep sixteen, with limited cooking facilities and few creature comforts. After slipping our moorings and sailing south on a broad estuary, endangered river dolphins soon began to appear, the air became cleaner, and gradually the ubiquitous cell-phones began losing touch with their home base.

Night comes early this time of the year and when we reached the mangrove proper it was already dark. Dinner was served, ample amounts of fine food, though not haute cuisine. After dinner we got acquainted with our fellow travellers, a mixed lot ranging in age from ten to seventy and including nationals of USA, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Germany, France, and Japan – some resident in Dhaka, others tourists or people visiting relatives. We were told that we would continue sailing till about 02.00 to make up for a plane delay out of Dhaka, but ran aground on a mud-bank just before midnight where we stopped for the night. Soon all on board were asleep in the tiny, but comfortable cabins.